GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:408
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2014
COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF DEGRADED OPEN FORESTS
Boianapalli Shri Vinod Kumar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the total land area under forests cover and the area out of which that is degraded or considered as open forest in square kilometers and percentage terms;

(b) whether the Government proposes to formulate a scheme for commercial exploitation of degraded/open forests, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government plans to harvest open forests in order to create jobs and reduce the import of wood by leasing out open/degraded forest land to paper industry and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the estimated job opportunities likely to be created as a result thereof; and

(e) whether the necessary amendments are being proposed in the National Forest Policy for the purpose and if so, the time by which the proposed scheme is likely to be made operational;

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 408 by Shri B. Vinod Kumar due for reply on 06.08.2014.

(a) As per India State of Forest Report-2013, the total area of the country under forest cover is 697,898 square kilometers which constitutes 21.23% of the geographical area of the country. Out of this, 295,651 square kilometers falls in the open forest category (canopy density of 10% or more and less than 40%) which is 8.99% of the geographical area of the country. In addition, 41,383 square kilometer falls under the category of scrub which constitutes 1.26% of the total geographical area of the country. The scrub is a degraded forest land having canopy density less than 10% not included in the forest cover and is treated as a separate category.

(b) There is no proposal to formulate a scheme for commercial exploitation of degraded/open forests. However, extraction of timber from the forest area is taken up by the State Forest Departments/State Forest Development Corporations as per prescriptions envisaged in the working plans of the concerned forest divisions.

(c),(d) & (e) There are no plans to harvest open forests in order to create jobs and reduce the import of wood by leasing out open/degraded forest land to paper industry.